



PRACTICE POLICY ON NEURODEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (ADHD AND AUTISM REFERRALS)

Introduction

We are receiving an increasing number of requests for referrals to Neurodevelopmental Services for ADHD and/or Autism assessments.

Before contacting us, please read the information below:

As a Practice we are committed to supporting patients with neurodevelopmental diagnoses, both children and adults. We are mindful that pressures on NHS services have increased in recent years, and that often patients seek private or 'right-to-choose' alternative mental health providers for diagnosis and treatment as a result.

This policy sets out the Practice's stance on acknowledging diagnosis and taking over treatment where requested. This document is based on national and local guidance, specifically as of February 2025 on; [NICE guidance NG87, CG128, Neurodevelopmental Services for Children and Young People – Accreditation Framework for Right to Choose Providers](#), [Norfolk and Waveney Approved Providers on the Adult ADHD Framework](#), [Norfolk and Waveney Patient Choice Policy](#) and the [Norfolk and Waveney ICB Shared Care Prescribing Guidance](#).

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of ADHD or ASD should be in line with NICE guidance, and before we code it in a patient's record we look for evidence in specialist letters that the appropriate full assessments have been carried out. These are outlined in the NICE guidance linked above.

Referral Process for Children (up to age 18)

Referral to Local NHS Services

If your child is >6 years of age and attends school

The school should be referring the child rather than the GP.

A new referral pathway was established in June 2024 allowing schools to refer directly for ADHD and autism assessments. This change recognises that schools are better placed to gather the necessary information and refer rather than the GP.

Please see this website which goes through the referral process. If needed please pass this information onto school so they can read the content and refer you on.

[6 years plus Assessment Team | NCH&C \(norfolkcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk\)](#)

If your child is >6 years of age and is either home schooled or does not attend school at all

Referrals in these circumstances need to come via the GP so please contact us for an appointment.

<https://lawsonroadsurgery.co.uk/appointments/>

What if my child is <6 years of age?

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ADHD – At present we cannot refer for ADHD assessments if a child is under 6 so if you have concerns your child has ADHD, you do need to wait until their 6th birthday before seeking referral.

You can get support if needed via <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/>

Autism – We can refer under the age of 6 if there are concerns about autism (for example if there are significant social communication problems). Please contact us for an appointment.

<https://lawsonroadsurgery.co.uk/appointments/>

Referral to Right to Choose Provider

Right to Choose provides you the option of asking for a referral to a particular provider of your choice for assessment. Please note: you need to investigate and decide which provider you would like us to refer to, we cannot recommend providers.

The Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) have approved four Right to Choose Providers for Children and Young People's ADHD and Autism Assessments:

[Help for psychology](#) (Autism or ADHD + initiation and titration of ADHD medication if appropriate)

[The Owl Centre](#) (Autism or ADHD initiation and titration of ADHD medication if appropriate)

[Evolve Psychology](#) (Autism or ADHD) *Note: if ADHD Prescribing is recommended following diagnosis, patient would need onward referral to NCHC/JPH (Evolve Psychology can make this referral directly but it will incur further waits for the patient)

[Paloma Health](#) (Autism only)

You can find more information about the ICB policy here [NHS Right to Choose Neurodevelopmental Services for Children and Young People – Information for Primary Care – Knowledge Now](#)

Once you have chosen a provider, please visit their website and ensure you have filled out all the pre-referral information (each provider will require something different and without this information we will be unable to refer), then contact us to ask for a referral to one of the listed providers. If medication is prescribed following the assessment we cannot guarantee that we will be able to continue this, as explained in more detail below. Every so often, providers will pause accepting any new referrals.

Referrals for Adults

Referral to Local NHS Services

ADHD

We can refer adults for suspected ADHD. There are very specific pieces of information which we need to include with the referral. We have prepared an electronic pre-referral questionnaire to send to patients seeking referral to gather all the necessary information.

You can contact us via our appointment system to request one of these questionnaires.

<https://lawsonroadsurgery.co.uk/appointments/>

Autism

Adults (18+) can self refer for an NHS autism assessment via Autism Service Norfolk here: [Autism Service Norfolk | NCH&C \(norfolkcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk\)](#)

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You do not need a GP appointment to access this service and the details on how to refer are outlined on their website. It does mention that if you self refer you should inform your GP which you can do by contacting us in the normal way.

Referral to Right to Choose Provider

Right to Choose provides you the option of asking for a referral to a particular provider of your choice for assessment.

Please note: You need to investigate and decide which provider you would like us to refer to, we cannot recommend providers.

The Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) have approved four Right to Choose Providers for Adult ADHD and Autism Assessments:

[The Owl Centre](#) (ADHD)

[Skylight Psychiatry](#) (ADHD or Autism)

[ADHD Net](#) (ADHD)

[CARE \(Centre of ADHD Research and Excellence\)](#) (ADHD)

All four providers will provide: ADHD assessment and initiation and titration of ADHD medication if appropriate, and Shared Care Agreements and annual reviews for those on medication.

Once you have chosen a provider, please visit their website and ensure you have filled out all the pre-referral information (each provider will require something different and without this information we will be unable to refer), then contact us to ask for a referral to one of the listed providers. If medication is prescribed following the assessment we cannot guarantee that we will be able to continue this, as explained in more detail below. Every so often, providers will pause accepting any new referrals.

ADHD Medication

Initiation of medication for ADHD must be by a specialist, after they have carried out the appropriate full baseline physical checks (as per section 1.7.4 of NICE guidance). The practice does not organise any of the above physical checks nor onward referrals, as these are explicitly for the specialist initiating medication to undertake. This is specified both in NICE and ICB guidance, and as a practice we apply the same rules to private as to NHS providers. We are of course happy to provide information on your medical history if requested; this should be by way of the consultant writing directly to us, not asking the patient to obtain information for them.

This means that if you see any specialist, NHS or private, who:

- *doesn't undertake these checks before prescribing, or*
- *asks us as your GP to do them on their behalf, or*
- *asks us to make an onward referral*

then we will not do these, and we will consequently not consider taking over shared care.

Similarly, before we will take over prescribing responsibility in line with shared care:

- *the patient needs to be on a stable dose of medication, and*
- *the choice of medication is in line with the ICB shared care agreement, and*
- *the patient needs to have annual follow-up with an ADHD service going forward*

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We are happy to refer from private to the local NHS specialist service to support this. If we receive no evidence of ongoing monitoring, then we reserve the right to cease prescribing.

Private providers should make it clear to patients that GPs are under no obligation to pick up shared care and cannot, in any case, if the medication suggested does not follow the locally agreed pathways. In this case the provider of the service must take full responsibility for prescribing and monitoring the medication. It is important to consider all potential costs when accessing a private specialist and this includes medication costs.

We recommend asking for referral to one of the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) approved Right to Choose Providers for ADHD and Autism Assessments. The approved providers listed above have undergone an additional quality assurance process established at the local level and have demonstrated compliance with Norfolk and Waveney quality benchmarks, meeting the standards required for inclusion in the Norfolk and Waveney framework. This process includes a thorough review of their diagnostic pathways, confirmation of adherence to our local shared care formulary, and ensuring the provision of annual reviews. ***If you choose to be seen by a provider that is not on the recommended list it is unlikely that the practice will accept the diagnosis and/or enter into a shared care agreement to prescribe medication recommended by that provider.***

The above are essential safeguards for us as doctors and prescribers. The General Medical Council advises us in “Duties of a Doctor” to prescribe in the best interest of the patient and only within our level of competence.

Last updated: 27th February 2025

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